

India Street Neighborhood Study
Robert Folger House
27 India Street
Nantucket
Nantucket County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-1049

HABS
MASS
10-NANT
75J-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

INDIA STREET NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY
ROBERT FOLGER HOUSEHABS
MASS
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Location: 27 India Street (on north side), Nantucket,
Massachusetts

Present Owner: Rosamond Hall

Present Occupant: Mrs. Hall

Present Use: Residence

Brief Statement
of Significance: Typical Nantucket four-bay house; part of India
Street Neighborhood Study (MASS-1013).

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

1794 -- Robert Folger, mariner, bought land "in the Third Squadron of the Wesco Acre Lots" from George Lawrence for 60 pounds and presumably built the house at that time.

For the next 77 years the property remained in the family, owned by his daughter Eliza and her husband James Macy, and grandchildren Catherine F. and George R. Folger, Alexander I. Macy, Robert F. Macy, Emeline Coffin, Robert L. Coffin and Mary E. and John H. Duncan. (The last three had moved to Geneva, Ohio, by 1871.)

1871 -- Frederick A. Dunham bought the property for \$412 from the heirs of Robert Folger, "to be held by the said Dunham as a homestead".

1889 -- Charles S. Vincent bought from Susan B. Dunham who had inherited under the will of Frederick A. Dunham who died in 1885. Agreement: Charles S. Vincent to pay debts and support Susan B. Dunham for the rest of her life.

1935 -- Janet W. Yates bought from the daughters of Charles S. Vincent: Ethel V. Harris, widow, Louise V. Lake and Mary W. Paige, they having inherited the property at his death.

1965 -- Alfred A. Hall and Rosamond Hall bought from Executors of Estate of Janet W. Yates.

1970 to date -- Rosamond Hall
(Abstract: Records Registry Deeds, Nantucket, Massachusetts.)

2. Date of erection: c. 1794. (Abstract: Deed in Registry Deeds, Nantucket, Mass. Book 13, Page 353.)

3. Architect: Probably none.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: The plans and construction are typically late eighteenth century Nantucket. H. B. Worth in "Early Houses" stated that "near the opening of the 19th century a modification of the lean-to style came into general use on the Island and contained all the advantages of the ancient type and was more convenient. Among these are several on India Street. This style consists of a 2-story house with center or end chimney and a 2-story ell in the rear. From 1795 to 1820 most of the large houses were of this pattern".
5. Notes on alterations and additions: House has been beautifully restored. Various changes have been made to meet the needs of successive owners but these have been in excellent taste and in keeping with the original architecture.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

In the 1790's George Lawrence, a dealer in land, sold three pieces of adjacent land, and the houses now at 25, 27 and 29 India Street were probably built by three different owners at about the same time. This house is the middle one.

India Street, later called Pearl Street but eventually changed back to India Street, was provided for in the layout of Wesco Acre Lots in 1678 and was in the Third Squadron. According to the Portfolio written in 1811, it was called India Row at one time, from the number of residents "who reside there in ease and affluence". Westminster Street to the north of India Street was formerly called Clay Lane and Micah's Pond extended from that area to the central part of India Street.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views: Old photograph of "Pearl Street" in Nantucket Illustrated, by A. Wittemann, New York: Albertype Press, 1888.

Prepared by Mrs. Marie M. Coffin
Nantucket, Massachusetts
June 1970

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Typical late eighteenth century Nantucket house of two stories with shed addition, wood frame with shingle exterior with wood quoins at street elevation, gable roof.

2. Condition of fabric: Excellent; minor and tasteful modifications in keeping with the style.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions including shed: 30' - 8" by 37' - 9".
2. Foundations: Brick foundation walls at south and north, rubble stone at east and west.
3. Wall construction: Wood frame, cedar shingles with 4" - 5" exposure, wood quoins painted white at southwest and southeast corners, corner boards elsewhere.
4. Structural system: Hewn timbers with girts, summer beams and corner posts exposed at the second floor level, beaded edges.
5. Chimneys: Multi-flue brick chimney, dentil course at cap, brick chimney for kitchen stove at north wall of ell.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorway and doors: Front doorway at street and stoop, simple classic doorway, six-panel wood door with top two panels glazed; wood stoop and steps at kitchen doorway.
 - b. Windows: Single-hung windows twelve-over-twelve, two-panel louvered wood shutters at exterior, painted black, cast iron pintles and hinges, spring wire keepers, sheet metal and glass storm sash.
7. Stoop: Raised wood stoop at street entrance, edge of sidewalk with brick paving to foundation wall, opposing steps, balustrade of turned newels, cylindrical balusters and molded rail; modern wood stoop at kitchen door; bulkhead to cellar at east elevation.
8. Roof: Gable roof parallel to street, asphalt shingles, boxed wood cornice, wood gutter, sheet metal downspout; roof rafters are hewn, purlins marked by vertical saw, sheathing parallels slope of roof, ladder to scuttle in north slope of roof; shed roof over addition of the rear; television antenna above roof.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plan (first floor only included in survey):
 - a. First floor consists of rectangle of original house and shed appendage, fireplace core dominates plan; stairway opposite entry to second floor, stair to cellar below; entry hall appears to have been modified to accommodate bath at southeast corner.

- b. Second floor consists of three corner bedrooms, stairhall and rear hall and bathroom off stairhall.
 - c. Raised or full cellar under original structure divided by fireplace foundations, stairs and wood bin, tamped earth floor; furnace and oil tank.
 - d. Garret divided by partition at west.
2. Stairways: L-shaped stairway to the second floor opposite front door, winders at top, square fluted newels with ivory button insert in top surface, turned balusters; stair to cellar accessible from entry hall; L-shaped staircase with winders in shed to second floor spaces.
 3. Flooring: Wide boards with natural and painted finishes, 15" - 20" wide average, 4" wood strip floor in kitchen.
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster ceilings, paper over plaster and panel walls, panel is feather edge with quarter-round, painted white or natural finish.
 5. Doorways and doors: Simple trim, four lights over some doors, four-panel and two-panel wood mortise and tenon construction with dowel fasteners.
 6. Decorative features and trim: Parlor cornice is composite of cyma reversa and dintel moldings, window head trim in same motif and projecting, panel wainscot, trim over fireplace is raised molding in dog-ear pattern; structural system of girts, summer beams and corner posts exposed in second floor, edges are chamfered or beaded.
 7. Notable hardware: Appropriate to period including metal block lock, brass knob at front door; H and HL hinges, brass pulls, exposed spring latches with sliding bolt, surface mount.
 8. Lighting: Modern electric.
 9. Heating: Modern oil fired hotwater system; off-center fireplace core with fireplaces in principal rooms; remains of two fireplaces in cellar with storage space between back walls; parlor fireplace has marble surround at opening, 9" by 9" quarry tile front hearth, brick back hearth; old kitchen fireplace equipped with cooking crane, brick hearth; one beehive oven adjacent to fireplace, wood door, strap iron lintel, separate flue; wood mantel above fireplace opening and oven; burning room fireplace simple rectangle opening with panel wall and bolection molding at surround; simple fireplaces in second floor bedrooms; separate fireplace construction allows space between fireplace backs forming "secret" chambers at first and second floor levels.

D. Site and Surroundings:

The Robert Folger House faces south on India Street, macadam surface edged with granite curbs and ceramic brick sidewalks to edge of building, flower garden at west and north with semi-formal landscape; cobblestone paved area east of house used for off-street parking for one automobile; wood balustrade fence with molded rail, cylindrical balusters and rectangular posts south and west of lawn, hedge at north limit, wood gate matching balustrade at southeast corner; access door in north foundation wall permits under-floor storage at shed; north yard elevated + 8" above west lawn defined with masonry curb.

Prepared by F. Blair Reeves, A.I.A.
Nantucket, Massachusetts
June 1970

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of the India Street Neighborhood Study (MASS-1013) made in the summer of 1970 by the Historic American Buildings Survey on Nantucket, Massachusetts. This is the fifth summer project of a continuing HABS comprehensive survey of the early architecture and urban design of Nantucket financed by a grant from the Nantucket Historical Trust.

The project was under the general supervision of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Project Director was Professor F. Blair Reeves, A.I.A., of the University of Florida. Historical information was provided by Mrs. Marie M. Coffin of Nantucket, Massachusetts. Photographs are by Jack E. Boucher of Linwood, New Jersey. The material was edited for deposit in the Library of Congress by Mrs. Constance Werner Ramirez, August 1971.